



Accessible Home Resources

**Disclaimer: Inclusion of a resource on this list does not imply an endorsement by Cure SMA and Cure SMA is not responsible for claims made by outside parties.*

This list of resources is meant to guide you in finding resources and support in making a home accessible. Please email familysupport@curesma.org with feedback on the resources provided here and to provide suggestions for resources to be added to this list.

This list is intended to help you begin to think about and explore what home modifications you may want to make to your home in its current state or what you may want to plan for if you are designing a new home. This is not an exhaustive list and there is an endless amount of direction found online and from experts in ADA accessibility that we encourage you to explore. It is the intention of this list to help organize your planning when modifying your home.

Indoor Modifications

1. Doorways

Doors should be at least 36 inches wide, but 42 inches is ideal. Make sure to look at how the doors open and if fully opening will be impeded by hitting a wall as this will decrease the entry way opening. Offset or "Z" hinges allow doors to swing clear of the doorway which will add a little extra clearance. You can also consider removing the door and/or the trim to allow for a wider entrance. Thresholds can create difficulty for wheelchair users, depending on what the threshold is made out of and how high it is. Consider the lowest profile threshold available. There are cushioned thresholds that flatten as chairs roll over them, as well. Lastly, door handles should be lever-style (as opposed to the traditional doorknobs that must be grasped and turned). Lever-style are easiest for individuals with muscle weakness to use. Another aspect to consider when looking at a home floor plan or considering building is the width of the hallways and whether the entrances to the rooms are "straight on" from the hallway or will require a turn. Turning radius should be at least 36 inches but 48 inches is ideal.

2. Lighting

Individuals who move around at wheelchair-height, can be impacted by glare from lights that someone at a standing-height may not notice (for example, under-counting or recessed lighting). Consider this when placing lights. Light switches and outlets should be placed at approximately 36 inches from the floor and should be accessible – not behind counters. Try different switches to ensure they can be successfully used by everyone in the home. Another way to turn on and off lights is to invest in "smart" lightbulbs. These light bulbs connect to an app and can be controlled either by the app or by voice command.

3. Flooring

The most important factors to consider when looking at flooring are that it's easy to maintain and easy to maneuver a wheelchair over. Some options include hardwood, laminate, ceramic tile, vinyl, or carpeting. All of these options work, depending on your budget and needs. Some are more expensive than others, some are harder to maintain, but with some research, you'll find what works best for you. Although most of these options are not carpeting, if you prefer it, you can look for carpeting with low pile that is less dense and therefore easier to travel over in a wheelchair. One thing to note is that area rugs can be difficult to move over and can become easily dislodged by a wheelchair, so it is helpful to keep this in mind when considering flooring. Carpet can often wear easily and may need to be replaced more often than other types of flooring.

4. Bedrooms

Bedrooms are best when they are comfortable and can be a respite away from the busyness of a home. To accomplish this, you want the space to be functional yet comforting. Consider the bed size you will use, as well as how much height the mattress used will add. Ensure there's enough space to move around the bed and for any needed transfers. If you will be utilizing a lift, ensure there's space for that and whether the bed needs space below it to place the lift while transferring. When considering storage, ensure that clothing and items used often are at an accessible height. Closet rods and shelves can be lowered for easy access while items not used as often can be placed at higher levels to fully utilize storage. Also consider storage you may want to have near by for often-used medical supplies. Bedside (or under bed) storage is a great place to put frequently used items. Also consider charging ports and stands for electronics, cell phones, etc. that are frequently used and how they can be easily accessed by someone lying in bed.

5. Kitchens

If a kitchen will be used both by individuals using wheelchairs and those not, it is helpful to consider having a lower height counter with an opening below, in at least one area, to allow for cooking and prep space at wheelchair height. Another option to accomplish this is to utilize pull-out work surfaces. Some cabinets can also be put on wheels in order to allow for them to be moved so a wheelchair can roll under the counter. Ensure that a wheelchair user can access the sink, including the faucet. Potential options include mounting the faucet on the side of the sink to make it easier to reach and/or using a touchless, motion sensor faucet. Appliances such as an oven, stove, and microwave can be placed at a lower level and when purchasing a stove/oven, make sure the controls are located at the front of the appliance and not behind the stove burners. Side by side refrigerator/freezer units will allow access to both sides (as opposed to a refrigerator with a freezer drawer). Lastly, cabinets are most useful if they have pull-out drawers within them or are "Lazy Susan" style. Both of these options allow much easier access to the items in the back of the cabinet.

6. Furniture

When purchasing furniture, there are many options that you can make work for you and your family. What you'll want to consider is the height and firmness of the furniture in order to make for easier transfers. One other type of furniture to consider are tables. Of course, you'll want to make sure the height works but another recommendation is to consider a pedestal-type table so that there aren't legs at each corner to have to maneuver around.

Outdoor Modifications

1. Entrances/Ramps

There are two types of ramps to consider. The first are pre-made ramps, which are often made of aluminum and can be moved or fixed permanently, or a ramp made of wood which is constructed to be permanently fixed to one place. The benefits of pre-made ramps are that they often weigh less and can be move from place to place (or used for traveling). They often have less of an aesthetic appeal, which is one of the pros of a wooden ramp. It can be crafted to match the style or color of your home. Whatever kind of ramp you decide upon, it is generally recommended that the ramp has 1 foot of length for each inch of height of the steps you are bypassing. Also, consider having a flat platform at the top of the ramp so that that the door can be opened without the wheelchair rolling backward. Another kind of ramp is a threshold ramp which is used to overcome a shorter height such as a step up into a home or a door threshold.

2. Garages

You'll want to make sure that there is enough space in the garage to deploy a ramp and/or load the vehicle inside the garage in case of inclement weather. It can also be helpful to install a remote-control door opener on the door leading from the garage into the home so a wheelchair user can enter

independently. An easy to reach garage door opener and light switch should also be placed near the entrance to the home for easy access.

3. Yards, Decks, & Patios

Having an accessible, comfortable outdoor space can make such a difference in feeling comfortable with your home. It is helpful to make your yard accessible directly from the inside of your home. Outdoor entertaining areas and paths to get to them should be surfaces that are non-slip, textured, and stable for wheelchair travel. Options include concrete, asphalt, or pavers (if placed close together). Grass, gravel, and mulch are not good options for paths. If installing a deck, ensure that the planks run perpendicular to the travel route so that wheelchair wheels do not become stuck in the cracks between the planks.

Additional Information: ADA guidelines, Resources, and Potential Grants

- **Wheelchair Accessible Modifications Guide** - <https://www.southbayresidential.com/wheelchair-accessible-home-modifications/>
The above information was gleaned primarily from this site, broken down, and summarized to make it easier and quicker to reference. See this site for in depth details on home modifications to consider.
- **Adaptive Access Toolbox** - <http://www.adaptiveaccess.com/toolbox.php>
This site is run by a business based out of Houston, TX that does accessible renovations. However, the site includes suggestions and photos, as well as ADA guidelines and resources sections. Lots of useful information as you plan home modifications.
- **Home Advisor: Grants for Home Modification** - <https://www.homeadvisor.com/r/grants-for-home-modification/>
“The following resources provide details on many of the grants available to provide you with a safe, comfortable home. Many of them include specific eligibility criteria, so be sure to check the requirements – as well as deadlines – for applying to each of these grant opportunities.”
- **Home Remodeling for People with Disabilities: What You Need to Know** - <https://www.expertise.com/home-design-and-renovation/home-remodeling-for-disability-and-special-needs>
“This guide will identify legal and financial resources available to citizens, seniors, and veterans, offer tips to hire the right home remodeler, and suggest modifications throughout the home to make the space as accommodating as possible.”
- **Americans for Independent Living: Home Modifications Checklist** – <https://www.americansforindependentliving.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Home-mod-checklist.pdf>
Checklist of what to consider as you build or search for an accessible home.
- **Home Ability Pros** - <http://abilityhomepros.com/the-complete-guide-to-home-accessibility-grants-directory-and-tips/>
“The Complete Guide to Home Accessibility Grants: Directory and Tips”
- **Special Needs Resource Project: Adding a Ramp to Your Home** - http://www.snrproject.com/Special_Needs/Resources/Ramps/Adding+a+Ramp
You’ll find tips for building/installing, common errors, and resources for funding ramps on this webpage.

EasterSeals Wheelchair Accessible Kitchen Ideas -

<https://www.eastersealstech.com/2014/06/04/accessiblekitchendesign/> Last updated 2/9/20